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wants, if it be regarded only on the practical side, it conceals its origin, and is as an opaque body between the eye and the Source of all good. It is the high and holy office of science to give transparency to the globe, so that every ray of light that penetrates its surface may be bent and converged, that all may fasten upon "the one only centre" from which all things proceed.

ART. V. — 1. *A History of the United States of America, from the Discovery of the Continent to the Organization of Government under the Federal Constitution.* By RICHARD HILDRETH. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1849. 3 vols. 8vo.

2. *A History of the United States of America, from the Adoption of the Federal Constitution to the End of the Sixteenth Congress.* By RICHARD HILDRETH. In three Volumes. Vol. I. *Administration of Washington.* New York: Harper & Brothers. 8vo. pp. 704.

If a plain and well written narrative of public events, mostly in the order of their occurrence, without any attempt to generalize them or to deduce from them the broader lessons of experience, is all that constitutes a good history, then Mr. Hildreth's work deserves its name, and has fair claims to respectful notice. It is easy to see, however, that this is not all, and that history written on such a plan must needs be imperfect and untrustworthy. It must be imperfect, because a large view of the facts, including their connection with each other, and with the causes in which they had their origin and the consequences to which they lead, is in itself a necessary part of the story, without which its other portions teach no valuable lesson, and cannot be fully understood. To keep an exact record of the apparent positions occupied by the heavenly bodies on many successive nights is not the whole duty of the astronomer. He must unravel all the laws on which their seemingly intricate movements depend, and thus enable us, from a detail of the past, to predict the future aspect of the starry heavens at any specified time. The task

of the historian is coextensive with that of the astronomer. He must not only chronicle the occurrences, but decipher their meaning, and point out the laws under which they take place. Otherwise, his work will have little more value than a collection of old almanacs.

A naked record of facts must also be untrustworthy ; it will be not merely incomplete, but deceptive. It will give rise to unfounded impressions, and create false judgments. Before the actions of men can be fairly estimated, we must have a full view of the circumstances which attended them, and the motives whence they sprang. The men of the seventeenth century must not be tried by the same standard as the men of the nineteenth century, and the policy of an infant settlement in the wilderness must not be compared with that of a long established and populous commonwealth. When the facts are related without regard to these circumstances, and without weighing these distinctions, history is false to its highest office ; it becomes a means of disseminating and perpetuating error and injustice. And it is sometimes designedly so abused. Gibbon has perverted the later history of the Roman empire in this way more frequently than in any other. Events are coldly narrated, not one of which, perhaps, can be called in question, though taken as a whole, they lend a seeming support to a false inference, because they are stripped of the local coloring which should be given to them from the age and the place to which they belong. He thus labored to make Christianity directly responsible for the vicious propensities of human nature which it failed to eradicate, and for the faulty constitution of society which it did not immediately cure.

After all, however, it is impossible to write history without seeking, either avowedly, or stealthily, or unawares, to verify some hypothesis, or establish some theory, which furnishes a reason and a guide for the selection and arrangement of the materials. It is not necessary to draw the inference, or set forth the doctrine, which the course of the narrative is calculated to illustrate or defend. What is skilfully left to implication generally strikes the reader's mind with more force than that which is boldly and earnestly inculcated. The facts have no connection with each other, and the story has no unity, unless some doctrine lies at the bottom to which they

are all, more or less, related. Without one false assertion or positive misstatement, a writer may give any tone to a narrative that he pleases, simply by an artful choice of the events to which prominence is given, and a studied collocation of the circumstances. And he may do this unconsciously, or while sincerely striving to elucidate the truth. Mitford could not write history without seeing in it ample proofs of the evil tendencies of a democratic form of government. Dr. Arnold, whose perfect honesty is his most shining characteristic, could not write history without finding in it striking illustrations of his peculiar views of the relation between church and state. And we may add, Mr. Hildreth cannot write history without making it one uniform record of the pernicious consequences of allowing the state even to recognize the existence of Christianity, or to adopt any measures which look to its observance and support. The evils of a theocratic form of government, and the folly and hypocrisy of rulers who profess to act upon religious principles, are the only topics of so frequent recurrence in his work as to give it an air of unity and a distinctive character.

"Of centennial sermons and Fourth of July orations," he remarks in his Preface, "whether professedly such, or in the guise of history, there are more than enough." No one, therefore, is to expect from him any thing after the manner of a sermon, or in the way of eulogy of our Pilgrim or Revolutionary fathers. He is to wipe away the "patriotic rouge" with which they have been "bedaubed;" to strip off "the fine-spun cloaks of excuses and apology" in which they have been "wrapped up;" and to exhibit them "without stilts, buskins, tinsel, or bedizenment, in their own proper persons."

All this, so far as it is a portraiture of the merely negative qualities of his work, is very well; and no one can reasonably object that the author has laid down such a plan for his work. But we need not ask our readers to observe, that the vehemence and acerbity of these expressions betray feelings as strong, as uncompromising, and as likely to mislead, as those which he here reprobates; they are equally likely to mislead him, though in an opposite direction. Prejudice is the thing to be avoided by all means, and whichever way it may point; not only the prejudice of mistaken attachment and misplaced eulogy, but of undue censoriousness and unfounded dislike.

If there is any choice between the two kinds of prepossessed and forestalled judgment, both of which are hostile to the truth, we must avow our preference for the more amiable one, — for that which has its root in love rather than that which has its root in hate. But he is no faithful and candid historian who does not sedulously and effectually guard his own mind and his readers' judgment against both.

We were not surprised, after reading Mr. Hildreth's preface, to find his history quite as one-sided and deceptive as a "centennial sermon" or a "Fourth of July oration." The only difference is, that where the preacher and the orator have gone to the right, he has carefully gone to the left. The truth lies about half way between them. Nothing can be more cold and naked than his recital of any facts which are honorable to the memory of the first settlers of New England; if they do not occupy a very prominent place on the common record, he forgets to mention them at all. When they are forced upon his notice, he dismisses them as rapidly as possible. He has not a word of praise for their conscientiousness, their heroism, or their self-denial; though the first alone caused them to emigrate, so that it was the seminal principle of the New England colonies, while the second and third sustained their settlements through many years of danger and privation. The zeal for education, which prompted the people of Massachusetts to found a college before they were yet free from the peril of starvation, and to establish a complete system of free schools before the first generation born in their new home had passed the age of childhood, a measure by which they took the lead of the most enlightened nations of Europe for two centuries, — is hardly mentioned; though half a page is given to a cold record of the fact that such institutions were created. The rigid observance of the most severe and ascetic scheme of morality and piety which was ever self-imposed by a whole community is a fact not deemed deserving of comment; though due stress is placed upon the circumstance, that they banished from the colony the few separatists who would not conform to this high standard, and be as pure, self-denying, and devout as themselves.

The main feature of the early polity of New England, in Mr. Hildreth's opinion, — that which throws all its other peculiarities into the shade, and was the source of the enormous

evils which sprang from it, — was its theocratic form. Founded on the Mosaic law, and carried out with Pharisaic precision and sternness, it is here depicted in its most forbidding aspect. It is represented as a cloak for vainglorious assumption, a persecuting disposition, and a self-seeking and ambitious spirit. The magistrates and their supporters, the members of the churches, are held up to censure and contempt as sour and intolerant fanatics, whose chief object, it would seem, in banishing themselves to these wild shores, was that they might exercise their spiritual tyranny without check, — that they might hang the Quakers, exterminate the heathen, and lord it with a high hand over the consciences and lives of all who lived under their insolent and usurped dominion. “All amusements were proscribed; all gayety seemed to be regarded as a sin. It was attempted to make the colony, as it were, a convent of Puritan devotees — except in the allowance of marriage and money-making — subjected to all the rules of the stricter monastic orders.” When the historian comes to speak of the decline and fall of this theocratic system, after it had prevailed in New England for about three quarters of a century, he justly observes, that “religion, so conspicuous hitherto, as the glowing, sometimes lurid, atmosphere of our historical picture, fades henceforth, almost vanishes away.”

Our objection to his account of this feature of the New England polity is precisely because he has made it “so conspicuous,” — because he has allowed it to color the whole atmosphere of his historical picture. This is not the historical truth, simply because it is not the whole truth, and because it is not presented in company with the other facts, a knowledge of which is essential before we can rightly estimate the wisdom or the folly, the merits or the faults, of our ancestors. What was the spirit of the age in regard to religious toleration? What was the practice of other countries, and especially of the mother country, to which the founders of Plymouth and Massachusetts naturally looked for example and guidance? How does the legislation of New England compare with that of Old England, in showing a regard for tender consciences? How long did the Anglican Church continue to persecute both Papists and Nonconformists, and what consideration did the stern Covenanters of Scotland show for honest differences of opinion? These are questions which need to be fairly

met and answered, before we are empowered to sit in judgment on the acts of a few feeble colonists here in America. 'But the latter might have learned toleration from their own sufferings under the hard hand of Laud, before they left their English homes.' Certainly, they *might* have learned it, if they could have anticipated the wisdom of after generations, and have shown the aptness of our own times in spelling out from history abundant proofs of the folly and wickedness of religious persecution. But the Presbyterians, when they came into power under the Long Parliament, had not acquired a meek and forgiving spirit from the recollection of their own sufferings under the prelates; nor was the Church of England taught toleration by the sad memories of its own degraded and persecuted position under the Commonwealth. A regard for the rights of conscience was a lesson hard to learn by the men of that time under any circumstances. The idea of religious liberty had yet scarcely risen above the horizon to any part of the civilized world, except in the protestations which were uttered by the oppressed party so long as they were oppressed, and forgotten by them as soon as they rose to power. The charge against a few obscure colonists, in their distant wilderness home, is, that they did not recognize, and carry out to its farthest legitimate consequences, a truth which had as yet hardly dawned upon the minds of the most enlightened statesmen and divines of Europe.

Still another circumstance is forgotten or left out of view by the historian who so sternly censures the fathers of New England for their lack of Christian toleration and for their theocratic polity. The constitution of a church necessarily differs from that of a state; and the affairs of a private religious association may properly be regulated in a different manner from those of an organized commonwealth. We commit the great error of judging the past by the present, when we hastily conclude that a theocracy was as impolitic and absurd in the Massachusetts of 1640, as it would be in the Massachusetts of the present day. The latter is a populous and flourishing state, numbering among its population believers and unbelievers, the followers of almost every faith that can be found on earth, all of whom live together harmoniously, because the government under which they live is neutral on all points of religious doctrine, and its sphere of influence is strictly

confined to temporal interests. The former was an association as homogeneous in religious faith as is that of the Mormons in Utah, and whose only purpose in emigrating was, like that of the Mormons, to separate themselves by many leagues of a pathless waste from all contact with other religious sects, and to build up for themselves a new church in the wilderness, where their faith and practice might continue pure, because removed from contaminating influences. Who will deny that such an intention is an honest and reasonable one? Who doubts that it would be an unjustifiable intrusion for a band of emigrants of very dissimilar faith, or of no faith at all, to insist upon removing to the same spot, and planting a church or a synagogue within a stone's throw of the new Mormon Temple on the shores of the great Salt Lake? In such a case, who would accuse the Mormons of any lack of charity, or of breaking the principles of philosophical toleration, if they should banish such intruders from their territory, and menace them with imprisonment and stripes, even with death, should they return? The object of the settlers of Massachusetts was not to found a state, but to build up a church, which should be free from all extraneous influences and heretical opinions, and should keep pure the faith once delivered unto the saints. Their motives were the same which urged the Plymouth colonists to leave Holland, where they were tolerated and secure, and to encounter all the perils of an ocean voyage for which their poverty allowed them to make but very insufficient provisions. These disliked the neighborhood of the Dutch churches; they feared the Babel of religious doctrine, and the great variety of sects to which religious toleration in Holland had given birth. Their children might be enticed away from them, might be taught strange doctrine, might intermarry with the Dutch, and thus finally lose their faith, their language, their English associations, and every thing which connected them with the land of their fathers. Any thing was better than the prospect of such a fate; isolation, a home in the wilderness, the neighborhood of savages, the fear of starvation, the loss of half their number by privation and sickness during the first winter, were better. Nothing was lost if they could retain their faith and their allegiance to their God.

These men were guilty of no other form or degree of

religious persecution than was strictly necessary for the execution of this great purpose. They did not seek to bind and restrain the consciences of men; they punished no one for heresy. But they claimed the ownership and jurisdiction of the territory granted to them in their charter, and they exercised an undoubted right in excluding from it all whose presence was distasteful to them. Those who did not agree with them in doctrine were required to leave this territory, and profess their obnoxious opinions elsewhere. The continent was broad enough; its long line of sea-coast, its interminable reaches of forest, the rich meadows extending along its magnificent streams, afforded space where every proscribed sect, and the people of every lineage, denomination, and tongue, might form colonies of their own. Practically, this was soon accomplished to a great extent; the anti-pædobaptists obtained a home in Rhode Island, the Roman Catholics in Maryland, those of the English Church in Virginia, the Quakers in Pennsylvania. Every sect might find a home where it would be secure, and from which, if they saw fit, they might, without any breach of Christian charity, exclude those who were not of their own faith. Every newly formed community, as well as every household, has a right to privacy on its own domain; it may justly dictate its own terms of fellowship, and expel all intruders.

The rule of toleration does not enjoin the same conduct in an infant settlement, that it does in a long established state. In the latter case, it is a hardship and a wrong for men to be debarred from the open profession of their own opinions, and from the full practice of their own forms of religious worship. It would be a mockery to say to them, you may depart and enjoy your faith and your modes of worship elsewhere. This would be calling upon them to give up their birthright, to leave their property, their homes, the graves of their fathers, every thing that is endeared to them by long association, and to become wanderers in a strange land. To many persons, banishment is as bitter as death. But the Puritan fathers of New England had submitted to this great sacrifice. They were self-banished men, who had crossed the ocean in order to get out of sight and hearing of what they deemed the idolatrous observances and heretical opinions which profaned old England. They had planted a pure church in the wil-

derness, and they had a perfect right to fence it round with jealous care. They had a right to warn all who were not of their own faith against coming thither, to expel them if they did come, and to punish them if they returned. This was all that they did, and this was not religious persecution. The persons thus warned off or expelled did not suffer loss or wrong. They were not spoiled of their property, nor driven from the homes and graves of their ancestors. Banishment is a word of ugly meaning, and it has been wrongfully applied to the measures of self-protection adopted by the early magistrates of Massachusetts. Sending off an intruder is not banishment. A vagrant is not banished when he is forcibly sent to his own parish. He has not acquired a domicil where he is found, and is therefore justly treated as an intruder.

We need not go beyond Mr. Hildreth's own work to find abundant evidence, that the Massachusetts company was such a private association as we have described ; that it was composed of persons who agreed with each other in their views of Christian doctrine and church government, as well as in their rigid and ascetic scheme of a religious life ; and whose object in coming hither was not to found a new colony to which all comers were to be invited, and whose prosperity was to be measured by the rapid increase of its numbers, but to establish a peculiar and separate Christian commonwealth, that should be a harbor of refuge to all of their own faith who were persecuted at home, or who wished to avoid, both for themselves and their families, the snares of false doctrine, the disputes of rival sects, and the contagious effect of evil example. Those who could not harmonize with them in doctrine and practice were to be treated, not as heretics, but as trespassers ; they were either sent back to England, or required to seek a new home on some other point of the American coast. Even before the charter was brought over, the two Brownes, having brought dissension into the little settlement at Salem, through their adherence to the ceremonies and liturgy of the English church, were arrested by Endicott as "factious and evil conditioned" persons, and compelled to embark for England, — "a proceeding," adds Mr. Hildreth, "characteristic enough of the future policy of the colony." Fair notice was given to deter all but the

desired class of emigrants from coming hither. In 1631, Dudley wrote home to the Countess of Lincoln, "If any godly men, out of religious ends, will come over to help us in the good work we are about, I think they cannot dispose of themselves or their estates more to God's glory or the furtherance of their own reckoning." "If any come hither to plant for worldly ends, he commits an error of which he will soon repent him; but if for spiritual, and that no particular obstacle hinder his removal, he may find here what may well content him." Mr. Hildreth himself, when speaking of the Southern colonies, remarks that "the policy of encouraging immigration from abroad, which contributed so much to the rapid advancement of Pennsylvania and Carolina, never found favor in New England. Even the few Irish settlers at Londonderry became objects of jealousy."

In 1637, after the contest with Vane and Mrs. Hutchinson, whose new-fangled doctrines had caused so much disturbance, the triumphant party, led by Winthrop and Wilson, "enacted a law by which all new comers were required to obtain a permit from one of the magistrates before they could be allowed to settle in Massachusetts; nor was any inhabitant to let a house to a new-comer, or entertain him above three weeks, without like permission." Nothing could be more absurd than such a law for an ordinary colony, which was intended to grow up into a flourishing state; and nothing could be more politic, humane, and justifiable for a private religious community, whose objects were not power and wealth, but liberty to worship God after their own fashion, and freedom from religious dissensions. Mr. Hildreth forgets himself far enough to state, (Vol. I. p. 408,) when considering the case of Mary Dyer, that "there was this peculiarity, indeed, in all the New England persecutions, with the single exception of Gorton's case, that heretics were persecuted, not so much as enemies of God, whom it was fit and meritorious to punish, but rather as intruders, whom it was desirable to get rid of, or at least to silence." We do not admit that Gorton's case was an exception; but however this may be, we submit that the fact here stated is not a mere palliation, but that it completely justifies the proceedings of the magistrates of Massachusetts. Intending to form a private and isolated religious association, made up of those only who held the same doc-

trines as themselves, and giving fair notice of their intention, they had a perfect right to thrust out of their jurisdiction, to remove from their territory, those whose tenets were distasteful to them, and who had been warned to keep away.

Gorton's case is not one that calls for sympathy. He was a convicted swindler, who turned hypocrite and false prophet, made "pretensions to a sort of transcendental enlightenment in religious matters," and "blessed God that he was not brought up in the schools of human learning;" — a heresy peculiarly offensive to the stern magistrates, who believed that a pure church could not live unless supported by colleges and common schools. He was fractious and turbulent in disposition, and created trouble wherever he went. Ejected successively from Plymouth, Massachusetts, and Aquiday or Rhode Island, "where he was publicly flogged on a charge of disrespect to the magistrates," he got possession of a tract of land, as the Indians alleged, by fraud and intimidation, and was soon involved in a new dispute with Massachusetts, who claimed the territory under a title which was at least as good as Gorton's. He was dispossessed by force, and imprisoned for a time, with several of his associates. But in less than six months, the whole party were dismissed, under an order to depart out of the jurisdiction, and never to return. The magistrates may have enforced a disputed claim with some harshness; but we do not see how, under these circumstances, they were guilty of religious persecution.

The outcry made by Gorton and others, who had been compelled to leave Massachusetts, created some alarm in England, even among the friends of the colonists; and Sir Richard Saltonstall wrote them a letter of gentle remonstrance, urging them "not to strive so much for uniformity as not to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Wilson and Cotton replied in the tone of men whose purposes and conduct had been grievously misrepresented. We are willing to take even Mr. Hildreth's brief extracts from their letter, as a fair exposition of their principles and motives. "We are far from arrogating infallibility of judgment," they say, "or affecting uniformity; uniformity God never required, infallibility he never granted us. We content ourselves with unity in the foundation of religion and church order." This is not the tone of bigots or persecutors; and as the letter was:

written in 1651, when Cromwell was at the head of affairs, there was no reason why they should disguise their sentiments, or give a false coloring to their policy. The Lord Protector was their friend and their brother in the faith. "You know not," the Boston ministers also say, "if you think we came into this wilderness to practise those courses which we fled from in England. We believe there is a vast difference between men's inventions and God's institutions; we fled from men's inventions, to which we else should have been compelled; we compel none to men's inventions." Mr. Hildreth puts a gloss upon this passage, to make it appear as "a downright claim of a divine character for their system." The language and the context do not fairly support this interpretation. The writers are apparently justifying themselves against the charge of exercising any compulsion whatever, or of practising those courses which they fled from in England.

For further illustration of the principles upon which the magistrates of Massachusetts acted towards those who disturbed the peace and religious unity of their infant settlement, we may refer to the original letter of instructions sent by the Governor and Company in England to Endicott and his Council, in April, 1629.

"We have, in the former part of our letter, certified you of the good hopes we have of the love and unanimous agreement of our ministers, they having declared themselves to us to be of one judgment, and to be fully agreed on the manner how to exercise their ministry; which we hope will be by them accordingly performed. Yet because it is often found that some busy persons, led more by their will than any good warrant out of God's word, take opportunities by moving needless questions to stir up strife, and by that means to beget a question, and bring men to declare some difference in judgment, most commonly in things indifferent, from which small beginnings great mischiefs have followed, we pray you and the rest of the Council, that if any such disputes shall happen among you, that you suppress them, and be careful to maintain peace and unity."

It was, probably, from this paragraph in his instructions that Endicott derived the authority which he exercised in the case of the Brownes, by sending them back to England. What the wishes of the Company were as to the manner in which it was to be exercised, or what their idea of the stringency of the measures to be adopted in order "to maintain

peace and unity," may be seen from another passage in the same letter.

"Mr. Ralph Smith, a minister, hath desired passage in our ships ; which was granted him before we understood of his difference in judgment in some things from our ministers. But his provisions for his voyage being shipped before notice was taken thereof, through many occasions wherewith those intrusted with this business have been employed, and forasmuch as from hence it is feared there may grow some distraction amongst you if there should be any siding, though we have a very good opinion of his honesty, yet we shall not, we hope, offend in charity to fear the worst that may grow from their different judgments. We have therefore thought fit to give you this order, that *unless he will be conformable to our government, you suffer him not to remain within the limits of our grant.*"

Was not this course candid, liberal, and just ? A company, which, in a legal point of view, was only a private mercantile corporation, though it was instituted for religious purposes, being anxious to preserve their infant settlement from the theological dissensions with which the mother country was convulsed, adopt a rule which was manifestly adverse to their pecuniary interests, whereby they refused a passage in their own ships, or permission to reside in their own domain, to any one whose religious opinions, however innocent in themselves, were calculated to disturb the harmony of their colony. They thus exercised an undoubted right in the management of their own property ; they laid no burdens upon tender consciences ; they practised no cruelty. They simply warned off all trespassers upon their grounds, and menaced them with punishment if they returned. Dissentients from the faith and practice of the company "were *banished* out of this jurisdiction ; and then," says Captain Roger Clap, "had the churches rest, and were multiplied."

The principle being a fair one, and the warning being once uttered, the magistrates did not shrink from the duty of carrying it into full effect. They were not men to throw out empty menaces ; they had God's work to do, and they did it with all their might. If the persons who troubled the peace of the Colony were obstinate and provoking, if they returned after they had been once sent away, they were punished with stripes and imprisonment, and once more warned to depart.

If, like the Quakers, they came a third time, they were put to death. But instances of this extreme severity were very few ; the sight of the gallows was enough to deter all but the most insane fanatics. Religious enthusiasm was a characteristic of those times ; it had been fostered by a protracted and cruel warfare between the rival churches in England and Scotland ; it had grown by persecution, and it urged many to the wildest excesses. The Quaker, the Anabaptist, and the Antinomian hungered and thirsted after the honors of martyrdom. They courted death, and through their outrageous conduct they sometimes obtained what they courted. In these days, such persons are accounted mad, and are shut up in lunatic asylums. But in the seventeenth century, when they disturbed the decencies of public worship, and shocked a devout people by the extravagance of their pretensions, claiming to be guided by "the inner light," and to utter their hideous outcries under the direction of the Holy Spirit, it was not strange that they were held to be blasphemers and children of the devil. "They were banished out of this jurisdiction," says honest Roger Clap, "not to return without license, upon pain of death. The reason of that law was, because God's people here could not worship the true and living God, as He hath appointed us in our public assemblies, without being disturbed by them." "A Quaker woman," says Mr. Hildreth, "frightened the Old South congregation in Boston, by entering that meeting-house clothed in sackcloth, with ashes on her head, her feet bare, and her face blackened, intending to personify the smallpox, with which she threatened the colony in punishment for its sins." Two young married Quaker women "walked naked through the streets of Newbury and Salem, in emulation of the prophet Ezekiel, as a sign of the nakedness of the land ;" the scandalized magistrates ordered them to be whipped from town to town out of the colony. Mary Dyer, the most noted martyr of this persuasion, was a third comer ; once she had been reprieved while on the gallows, on condition of leaving the colony within forty-eight hours ; and the magistrates relied on her case, in a published defence of their conduct, as a proof that they sought "not the death, but the absence of the Quakers." One of her sisters in the faith, Mary Fisher, after being expelled from New England, set off for Constantinople, in order to con-

vert the Sultan from Mohammedanism ; as the Turks treat insane persons with awe, believing that they are under the visitation or inspiration of God, she passed unharmed through their armies, and obtained an audience of the Grand Vizier, though we do not read that she made a convert of him. A fair consideration of these cases proves, we think, not that Massachusetts persecuted the Quakers, but that the Quakers persecuted Massachusetts. The great sobriety and decorum of this sect in our own times lead us to form a false judgment of their early history, when they were the wildest and most intolerable of fanatics. Even so discreet a person as William Penn proved himself to be in after life, did not escape just and severe censure for the extravagance of his conduct when first converted to Quakerism ; he was expelled from Oxford for attacking his fellow students in the streets, and tearing their gowns from their backs, as unseemly relics of popery.

The view now given of the character and purposes of the Massachusetts Colony both explains and justifies the chief feature in its polity, — the exclusion of all but church members from the freedom of the company, or from the privilege of voting at the elections. It was a private association formed for religious purposes, as most other incorporated companies are instituted for pecuniary gain. In either case, the direction of affairs is naturally intrusted to those who are most likely to promote the ends for which the company was established. If money is the object, the government naturally devolves on those who have the largest pecuniary interest in the association, and who may be presumed, also, to have the most skill and experience. If a colony is formed by such a company, the managers of it, in the first instance, will be appointed by the company itself ; and if it be afterwards deemed expedient to allow the colonists to choose their own officers, the right of suffrage may justly be limited by a property qualification. Those only who pay a certain amount of taxes will be allowed to vote. No one has a right to complain of such a limitation, no one thinks of complaining of it. But if the company and the colony are avowedly formed for religious purposes, for the establishment of a pure church rather than of a prosperous commonwealth, then the officers will be selected with a view to their moral and religious qualifications, and only the members of the church be

allowed to vote. We see not why this qualification is any more open to censure than the other. If the founders of the colony had aimed at political objects, if it had been either their avowed or their secret purpose to establish a government in which the kingly and the aristocratic power should be abrogated, and the rights of the whole body of the people should be recognized, such a preference accorded to church members would have been inconsistent, impolitic, and unjust. But they entertained no such intentions; they were very far from being republicans; they preserved most social distinctions with jealous care. Mr. Hildreth rightly says, that "a discrimination between 'gentlemen' and those of inferior condition was carefully kept up." The republican element did not begin to develop itself in New England till a much later day; and the theory of absolute equality, both political and social, was hardly so much as broached for some years after the establishment of American independence. This dogma was first preached by the speculative zealots of the French Revolution. Yet it is only by the gross anachronism of antedating this political gospel for a century and a half, that the early polity of Massachusetts is made to appear censurable. In limiting the right of suffrage, the fathers of the colony only conformed to the general ideas of the age; in so limiting it as to throw the power into the hands of the most religious portion of the community, rather than of the most wealthy, or of the most distinguished in point of family, their course was not only defensible but praiseworthy. The principle was a new one, it is true; it had never before been applied, and had not even been considered by the doctors of political science. But as society was then constituted, and as no one then desired, or even thought of, universal suffrage, we doubt whether any limitation of the right could have been devised which would have been safer or more justifiable than the one adopted in Massachusetts. That age was not, what our own is, one of general religious indifference. All the earnest, thinking, and most respectable portion of society made a public profession of their faith, and became members of the church. Owing to the manner in which the settlement had been formed, a great degree of religious unity had been secured. The population were homogeneous in point of doctrine; some dissentients had crept in, some had seceded from the faith which they

once held ; but there is no doubt that the vast majority of the population were Congregationalists or Independents, — were followers of Wilson, Cotton, Norton, Eliot, and Shepherd. They accepted the qualification established by the General Court as a natural and equitable one ; no general discontent was awakened by it till a much later period, when, contrary to the expectations, and almost to the wishes, of the fathers of the colony, it had far outgrown its primitive condition and character, had ceased to be a private religious association, and had become comparatively a numerous and flourishing body politic. Then, as it had lost its distinctive religious character, a change became inevitable ; and this change, through the grant of the new charter, in 1691, was quietly effected.

We think, therefore, that Mr. Hildreth's severe censures and bitter sneers, directed against the theocratic polity of Massachusetts, are wholly unfounded and uncalled for ; they are based on the gross anachronism of judging the past by the present, forgetting the wholly dissimilar circumstances of the two cases. He thus shows the incorrectness of the theory upon which he writes history ; he commits high treason against truth, by artfully causing it to perform, the office of falsehood, — by causing it to deceive. By simply narrating the facts respecting this theocratic polity, and not taking a comprehensive view of them, not considering them in their connections and relations with the distinctive features and opinions of that age, and with the peculiar circumstances and intentions that led to the establishment of the colony, he leaves the reader to infer, and even invites him to infer, that this scheme of government was, then and there, as absurd and unjust, as it surely would be if suddenly established over a great commercial people at the present day. He might as well censure the first settlers of Massachusetts for lighting their houses with candles instead of gas, and for not introducing the system of thorough drainage and the rotation of crops into their agriculture. He asserts indirectly, (Vol. i. p. 322,) that liberty was "without one abiding spot in New England," except at the Providence Plantations. Speaking of the church government recognized in the New England Platform, compared with that of the Westminster Assembly, he says, —

"By neither system was any individual freedom of opinion allowed. The churches and their members were alike subjected in both to the iron will of a majority, assuming to itself all the pretended infallibility of a Pope or a General Council, the only difference being, that Presbyterianism established a regular gradation of church courts, in which the clergy predominated, while the occasional councils and synods of the Congregational system, as it was called, gave a *nominal* equality to the lay church members." Vol. i. p. 328.

As the affairs of every association in the United States, whether political or religious, are even now subjected, in all cases, "to the iron will of a majority," we do not see much point in this complaint against the Congregational system as established in Massachusetts more than two centuries ago.

Our author's intense dislike of what may be called the Massachusetts system extends even to those by whom it was administered, of whom he often speaks in such wise as in the following sentence: —

"The people of Warwick complained that their Indian neighbors, dependents on Massachusetts, were guilty of constant annoyances and depredations, in which it was more than insinuated that Massachusetts encouraged them — conduct which might seem to give color to part, at least, of an heretical opinion charged against Easton, now governor of Rhode Island, 'that the elect had the Holy Ghost and also the devil indwelling.'" Vol. i. p. 378.

In the same spirit, when speaking of the general consternation caused by the outbreak of Philip's war, Mr. Hildreth says, —

"Not content with realities sufficiently frightful, superstition, as usual, added bugbears of her own. Indian bows were seen in the sky, and scalps in the moon. The northern lights became an object of terror. Phantom horsemen careered among the clouds, or were heard to gallop invisible through the air. The howling of wolves was turned into a terrible omen. The war was regarded as a special judgment in punishment of prevailing sins. Among these sins, the General Court of Massachusetts, after consultation with the elders, enumerated neglect in the training of the children of church members; pride, in men's wearing long and curled hair; excess in apparel; naked breasts and arms, and superfluous ribbons; the toleration of Quakers; hurry to leave meeting before blessing asked; profane cursing and swearing; tippling houses; want of respect for parents;

idleness; extortion in shop-keepers and mechanics; and the riding from town to town of unmarried men and women, under pretence of attending lectures — ‘a sinful custom tending to lewdness.’ Penalties were denounced against all these offences; and the persecution of the Quakers was again renewed.” Vol. i. p. 483.

This is not writing history, but inditing a satire; the author’s leading purpose, to hold up the theocratic system and the fathers of Massachusetts to hatred and contempt, is rather too manifest. We submit that the style even of “centennial sermons and Fourth of July orations” is more creditable to the writer’s feelings, and more conformable to the truth, than this bitter and sarcastic manner. When great national calamities happen, the idea of a people humbling themselves before God, and confessing their sins, does not seem to all persons so ridiculous as it is here represented. Some real and grave offences are here enumerated; if others are mingled with them, at which the more enlightened spirit of a later generation is tempted to smile, a broad charity and a thoughtful consideration of the character of the men and the times will still find some excuse for the error.

We can find room but for one extract more; and we choose one which shows that the theocratic system had some excellencies which our author is forced to admit, though in a very ungracious manner.

“Even the theocratic form of government prevailing in New England tended to diminish the influence of wealth, by introducing a different basis of distinction; and still more so that activity of mind, the consequence of strong religious excitement, developing constantly new views of religion and politics, which an arrogant and supercilious theocracy strove in vain to suppress. Hence, in New England, a constant tendency toward social equality. In Virginia and Maryland, on the other hand, the management of provincial and local affairs fell more and more under the control of a few wealthy men, possessed of large tracts of land, which they cultivated by the labor partly of slaves, but principally of indented white servants.” Vol. i. pp. 508, 509.

Blasphemy was made punishable with death in Massachusetts by a law passed at least as early as 1641; it was made punishable in the same manner in Maryland and New York, and with severe penalties in Virginia, and some of the other colonies, where not one feature of the theocratic system was established. However impolitic or improper such legislation

may be, it was characteristic of the age rather than of the place; and it is not probable that, in America, the extreme penalty for this offence was ever inflicted. The law was probably *brutum fulmen* everywhere; it was the spontaneous dictate of the religious sentiment of the community, which was probably satisfied with its enactment, though no measures were taken for enforcing it. Mr. Hildreth says, that "it was deemed necessary to support by civil penalties the fundamental doctrines on which the theocracy rested." The preamble of the Massachusetts statute, which was reenacted in 1649, declares that "albeit faith is not wrought by the sword, but the word, — nevertheless, seeing that blasphemy of the true God cannot be excused by any ignorance or infirmity of human nature," therefore "no person in this jurisdiction, whether Christian or pagan, shall wittingly and willingly presume to blaspheme his holy name," &c., under penalty of death. The following is our historian's comment upon this law: —

"This enactment, with some modification in its terms and relaxation of the punishment, is still to be found in the Massachusetts statute-book. It has lately been held to be constitutional by the Supreme Court of that State, upon argument in a contested case, notwithstanding an express provision in the Massachusetts Bill of Rights that no person shall be molested for his religious profession or sentiments. *Constitutions, indeed, go for very little when in conflict with the hereditary sentiments of their expositors.*" Vol. i. p. 369.

Another law, enacted a few years afterwards, subjected to severe penalties, and finally to death, "any who denied the received books of the Old and New Testament to be the infallible word of God;" and Mr. Hildreth again remarks:—

"This statute, also with some modifications in the terms and the punishment, is still in force in Massachusetts — *constitutional, no doubt, according to the legal authority above cited.*"

We shall not pause to remark on the decency of introducing into a grave account of the early history of America these sneers against the judicial exposition of the law in Massachusetts at the present day; nor even upon the full meaning of the phrase, "*with some modifications*" in the terms and the punishment," with which the assertion that

these statutes are "still in force" is qualified. But we take issue with the author upon his leading doctrine, here implied or directly asserted, that *any* punishment of blasphemy is a violation of religious freedom, and of that article in the Bill of Rights which ordains that "no person shall be molested *for his religious profession or sentiments.*" We adopt in all its parts the article which is here alluded to, as a fair expression of the true doctrine of religious toleration.

"It is the right as well as the duty of all men in society, publicly and at stated seasons, to worship the Supreme Being, the great Creator and Preserver of the universe. And no subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience; or, for his religious profession or sentiments; *provided he doth not disturb the public peace, or obstruct others in their religious worship.*" — *Mass. Constitution*, Part I. Art. 2.

Language as broad as this might well content the most uncompromising advocate of religious freedom. Yet a law for the punishment of blasphemy does not conflict either with the letter or the spirit of this article. Under such a law, a man may hold whatever religious or irreligious sentiments he chooses, and no one can molest him. He may even profess his opinions, — may declare them in the marketplace or publish them in the newspapers, if he does not add contumelious or defamatory expressions respecting the faith of others. No one has a right, under pretence of avowing his own faith, to insult that of his neighbor. Libel and slander are made punishable without violating the general principle of freedom of the press; and for similar but stronger reasons, the scoffer and the ribald may be restrained by the terrors of the law from polluting the ears of the young, and shocking the religious sentiments of a whole community, with his coarse jeers and blasphemous expressions. If the law protects the reputation of individuals against wanton and slanderous assaults, and guards its own dignity by shielding its ministers from insult, much more may it shelter from outrage that idea, reality, or belief, which is surrounded with strong affection and reverential awe in the hearts of millions. What is really protected in such a case, is, not the object of worship, but the feelings of the community which relate to

that object. Hence the law is equally justifiable and reasonable, even if the object be a stock or a stone, — even if it be, as the scoffer pretends, a mere fiction created and supported by a few designing men for their own benefit. Though the deep awe with which it is surrounded be blind, and the faith in which it is enshrined be unthinking and baseless, the persons cherishing those feelings are not to be wantonly reproached and insulted for their errors. If a Christian zealot should signalize his faith in the streets of Constantinople by loudly scoffing at Islamism and denouncing Mahomet as an impostor and false prophet, he might be torn in pieces by the irritated populace, and the general opinion of Christendom would be that he had fully merited his doom. Certainly, no arm would be outstretched to avenge him.

Blasphemy is still a penal offence in most Christian countries throughout the world, though the law relating to it has been of late years but seldom enforced. It remains for the most part a dead letter, partly because the knowledge of its existence, *inclusum in tabulis, tanquam in vagina reconditum*, operates as a restraint, and prevents the scoffer from urging the patience of the community too far; and partly from the fear lest its exercise should give greater publicity to the offence than it would otherwise obtain, and should harden the offender in his guilt by the natural reaction against punishment. These are considerations of expediency, not of right. The judicious friend of religion may lament the necessity of keeping such a law upon the statute book; but he cannot deny that the offence against which it is aimed is as justly punishable at a human tribunal, as slander, open obscenity, or beastly intemperance. Among a Christian or a pagan people, it is as grave a crime to issue blasphemous books as to circulate obscene publications.

But Mr. Hildreth carries his notions of religious freedom still further; he objects to all laws requiring the observance of Sunday, or establishing any measure of religious belief as a qualification for suffrage or office. The following, for instance, is his comment upon the earliest acts of legislation in the new province of Pennsylvania.

“A code, called the ‘Great Law,’ was also enacted, compiled, for the most part, from the forty articles agreed upon in England, but with some additions. This code gave the rights of

'freemen,' that is, of voting and being elected to office, to every freeholder and tax-payer; but 'faith in Jesus Christ' was required as an additional qualification. Toleration was secured to 'all persons who confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and eternal God to be the creator, upholder, and ruler of the world, and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society.' None such were to be 'molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion, or practice in matters of faith and worship; nor shall they be compelled, at any time, to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place, or ministry whatever.' Yet the very next provision, *with an inconsistency of which examples are sufficiently numerous, proceeded to interfere with 'practice in matters of worship,'* by requiring all to abstain from their common daily labor 'every first day of the week, called the Lord's Day.' " Vol. ii. p. 68.

He quotes with deserved praise the celebrated provision in the charter of Rhode Island, "that no person within the said colony shall be molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any differences of opinion in matters of religion who does not actually disturb the civil peace; but that all and every person and persons may at all times freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgments and consciences in matters of religious concerns, they behaving themselves peaceably and quietly, and *not using this liberty to licentiousness and profaneness, nor to the civil injury and outward disturbance of others.*"

"It does not appear that the people of Rhode Island either desired to insert, or were anxious to enforce, the dangerous and inconsistent proviso about licentiousness and profaneness — quite sufficient, indeed, to defeat the whole prior grant, since it is only under one or the other of these pretences that opinions have any where been persecuted. Yet how difficult it is to act up to a principle in the face of prevailing prejudice and opposing example! The Rhode Island laws as first printed, many years posterior to the charter, contain an express exclusion from the privileges of freemen of Roman Catholics, and all persons not professing Christianity. These laws had undergone repeated revisals, and it is now impossible to tell when these restrictions were first introduced, though probably not till after the English revolution of 1688. Statutes were also enacted in Rhode Island, as in the other colonies, prohibiting labor or amusements on Sundays. However open to cavil, yet these laws do not materially diminish the credit of Rhode Island as pioneer in the cause of religious

freedom ; for in which of our statute-books, even at this very day, are not similar inconsistencies to be found ?" Vol. i. p. 459.

Perfect religious toleration, then, in Mr. Hildreth's opinion, is inconsistent with any attempt to repress licentiousness or profaneness by law, or to enforce the observance of Sunday by prohibiting ordinary labor or amusements on that day, even in communities like those of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania at the earliest periods of their history, when all the inhabitants were Christians in name, and probably much the larger portion of them were sincerely desirous of honoring their religious profession by their conduct. We need not enter into any argument here in defence of sabbatical institutions, or even attempt to show that they conduce so largely to the happiness and civilization of the laboring classes of mankind, that the legislator who denied their divine origin might well uphold them on the ground of their acknowledged utility. But is it so great a hardship for a few to be required to abstain, on one day out of the week, from such labor or amusements as will disturb the devotions of many, that the law requiring such abstinence must be deemed an act of religious persecution ? Such a law requires no profession of faith from the recusant, and does not enjoin the performance of any act which he can decline on the ground that it violates his conscience. It requires nothing positive ; its purport, like that of most other penal laws, is simply negative or prohibitory. It declares that no one shall make his belief or his disbelief an occasion or an excuse for molesting the faith and practice of the bulk of the community ; and it subjects him to no disability or privation which is not common to all, so that it creates no injurious distinctions. It does not impose the faith of the great majority upon a few dissentients, but it prevents a few dissentients from imposing their faith upon the majority by disturbing their devotions and openly desecrating a day which they consider sacred. Is there any difference in principle between such a law and one which prohibits what are legally termed 'common nuisances' in a populous neighborhood, — which does not allow, for instance, an individual to establish upon his own ground, in the heart of a great city, a slaughterhouse, or a manufactory which will poison the surrounding air with its exhalations ? We believe that neither the republican principle, of submitting to clearly

defined general rules established by the constitutionally expressed will of the majority, nor the utilitarian principle, of promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number, is at variance with either of these prohibitions.

When Andros was appointed governor of New England, James II.'s famous Declaration of Indulgence was proclaimed; "and now, *for the first time*," says Mr. Hildreth, "Quakers, Baptists, and Episcopalians enjoyed toleration in Massachusetts."

"That system of religious tyranny, coeval with the settlement of New England, thus unexpectedly received its death-blow from a Catholic bigot, who professed a willingness to allow religious freedom to others as a means of securing it to himself. It is, indeed, upon this compromise alone — the mutual indulgence of a few powerful sects for each other — a matter of policy rather than of right, that a partial religious freedom has been gradually introduced into Christendom. Even in the United States of America, however the Constitutions of most of the States may seem to guarantee it, the abstract right of opinion is hardly anywhere practically acknowledged — a consideration to be very seriously weighed before we exult too loudly over the past." Vol. ii. pp. 109, 110.

The attempt to maintain unity of doctrine in Massachusetts had been practically given up long before the appointment of Andros. In 1681, in answer to a complaint by king Charles, suggested by Randolph, the General Court declared that liberty of worship was then granted to all denominations of Christians in Massachusetts. As early as the outbreak of Philip's war, in 1675, the Quakers, the most obnoxious and troublesome of these sects, had become so numerous in the Colony, that their refusal to bear arms, or to pay the fines imposed on defaulters, caused much trouble, and provoked the reenactment of an old law prohibiting Quaker assemblies for worship. The provocation was certainly great, for the crisis was a perilous one, the Colony being then engaged in a struggle for life and death with the savages, and needing the services of every man capable of bearing arms. The old law had gone into disuse, and no attempt seems to have been made to execute the new one, because the danger from the Indians, which had caused its revival, soon passed away. From that time forward, the Quakers were not molested ex-

cept when a few zealots among them committed excesses, which would even now be punished as scandalous breaches of the peace. The Baptists were obnoxious, because they violently opposed an ordained and paid priesthood, and professed a great contempt for human learning. But they formally organized a church in Boston as early as 1664, and fourteen years afterwards, they provided for its accommodation by erecting a meeting-house. Some opposition was made to both these acts ; but the Baptists pleaded that their house was built when there was no law to prevent it, and their perseverance was finally crowned with success. No attempt was afterwards made to imprison or banish them. Dunster was president of Harvard College from 1640 to 1654, and Chauncy for seventeen years afterwards, long after they had avowed Baptist opinions. The number of Episcopalians in the Colony, before the coming of Andros, was too small for the establishment of a church ; and we know not that any individual among them was ever a subject of persecution.

But our historian carries his zeal for philosophical toleration so far, as shown in the preceding extract, that he censures the constitutions and laws of most of the States, as they exist at the present day, because they afford insufficient guaranties for the abstract right of opinion. We know of no ground for this censure, except that the testimony of atheists, and of those who do not believe that God governs the world, is not received in our courts of law, that blasphemy and profaneness are still punishable offences, though they are very seldom punished, and that, as most incumbents of public office are required to swear fidelity to the constitution and the laws, no conscientious persons can accept office who reject the doctrines which are usually understood to furnish the sanctions of an oath. These provisions only develop and apply the old doctrine of the common law, both in England and America, that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land ; and it may be doubted whether a great part of the early legislation of Massachusetts, which Mr. Hildreth adduces to prove the intolerant and tyrannical disposition of the fathers of the Colony, is any thing more than a formal reënactment, with severer penalties, of principles and rules which the English courts have always recognized and acted upon, though they were not embodied in positive statutes.

Whether the laws and practices of the courts, as they now exist, embody religious belief enough to impose any hardship, which can properly be called persecution, upon the very small number of persons who alone have personal reasons for complaining of them in this respect, is a question that we do not care to discuss. But it is certain that they are instituted and upheld, not from a spirit of persecution, or from any vain desire of securing uniformity of belief, but from a conviction, whether well or ill founded, that society is not secure without them, — that good government cannot be maintained and the laws enforced, if the laws are not strengthened and ratified by a sense of religious obligation. They are not designed for ecclesiastical ends, though they relate to religion ; they are civil or political ordinances, designed for the security of the state ; and the only question which can properly be mooted about them is not one of abstract right, but of expediency. Those who are responsible for them are not open to reproach for bigotry or intolerance, but, if at all, for a want of political sagacity.

But we have given illustrations enough of the spirit and tenor of Mr. Hildreth's work. The reader can judge how far he has executed the intention expressed in his Preface, "to set forth the personages of our Colonial and Revolutionary history such as they really were," without prejudice or partiality. He seems to us to labor under a more serious disability for ascertaining and expressing the truth respecting them than any which afflicts the authors of "centennial sermons or Fourth of July orations." As a historian of the Puritan fathers of New England, indeed, he lacks the first requisite for the successful performance of his task, — the power to appreciate their motives and understand their purposes. He has exaggerated all their faults, and hardly given us a glimpse of their virtues. His narrative suggests an important question which it does not enable us to answer ; — how was it that a colony established under many unfavorable circumstances, by sour and intolerant fanatics, who violated every principle of civil and religious freedom, still grew and prospered without check and without external aid ? The settlements in Virginia and New York, though of earlier date, and conducted on what Mr. Hildreth considers a more liberal policy, and bountifully supported, also, from their mother countries, lan-

guished for many years, and were, more than once, on the point of extinction. They were soon outstripped by the steady and vigorous growth of Massachusetts, the sources of whose prosperity were altogether internal. Virginia, says Hutchinson, "was in a dying state, and seemed to revive and flourish from the example of New England." The historian of America may speak as coldly as he chooses of the abstract worth and dignity of the motives which brought our Puritan fathers to these shores; but till he has analyzed them, and traced out their effects upon the conduct of affairs and the prosperity of the settlements, his work will be a mere chronicle of events, the causes and consequences of which will remain inexplicable.

We would fain stop here; but one other peculiarity of Mr. Hildreth's work is so prominent that it would be improper to pass over it in silence, though any allusion to it must be painful. Truth compels us to add, that his language respecting religion itself is, to say the least, singularly unguarded; that it too often seems charged with sarcasms or defamatory insinuations. We do not accuse him of any deliberate intention to imitate the worst feature of Gibbon's great work; his subject does not afford scope for a systematic attack upon Christianity, and a writer at the present day risks too much when he allows himself even to be suspected of such a purpose. But in his zeal against every form of what he conceives to be ecclesiastical oppression, in his opposition to any acknowledgment of Christianity by the state, and in warmly defending the abstract right of opinion and free discussion, he too frequently forgets himself, and uses language that is likely to deceive the unwary and to shock the reverent mind. The pages of history offer no place for abstract theological discussion; we expect to find in them neither an exposition of the author's own creed, nor a series of covert attacks upon the creed of others. We do not ask the writer to go out of his way in order to pay homage to religion for the good which it has accomplished; but he must be equally cautious about overstepping his limits for the purpose of upbraiding it with the corruptions it has suffered in former ages, and with all the evil that has been done by its reputed friends. We proceed to point out some of the passages in Mr. Hildreth's work which seem objectionable in this respect, in the

hope, if the error has arisen only from inadvertence, that they may be altered or expunged, should the volumes pass to another edition.

When speaking of the origin of the witchcraft delusion in Massachusetts, in 1692, Mr. Hildreth says, —

“The idea of fixed general laws binding the universe is of very modern origin, at least of very modern currency. Special supernatural interference served for ages as a compendious and comprehensive explanation of all rare and unaccountable events. The Protestants, while they rejected with passionate contempt the miracles and relics of the papal church, were yet by no means free from superstition. Eastern legends, derived, it would seem, to Europe, from the Paulicians, and through them from the Manicheans, and through them from the Persian Magi — legends which gave to the devil a great influence over the events of this world — had made a profound impression upon the Hussites and Lollards, forerunners of Luther's Reformation. For two or three centuries previous to Luther, the devil figures more and more in the popular mythology of Europe. Luther himself encountered the arch tempter, but put him to flight with an inkstand — truly, in his hands, a formidable weapon !

“The Protestants seem to have indemnified themselves for rejecting so many popish fables by remodelling the old Scandinavian, classical, Oriental, and Middle-Age legends on the subject of witchcraft into a somewhat new shape, a counterpart, as it were, to the Protestant theological system. A covenant was supposed between the devil and certain unhappy persons called witches, a sort of parody on the covenant between God and his holy elect.” Vol. ii. p. 145.

The following remarks are introductory to an account of the organization of a new church in Boston, “on the express principle of not requiring any public relation of religious experience.”

“A new school of divines, known as Latitudinarians, sprung up among the Protestants toward the conclusion of the previous century, had essayed the delicate task of reconciling reason with revelation. They not only rejected the authority of tradition, so highly extolled and implicitly relied upon by the Catholics and the English High Churchmen ; they scouted, also, that special interior persuasion which the Puritans, after the early Reformers, had denominated faith, but which to these reasoning divines seemed no better than enthusiasm. They preferred to rest the truth of Christianity on the testimony of prophecy and miracles, of which they undertook to establish the reality by the application

to the Bible history of the ordinary rules of evidence, by which same rules they undertook to establish, also, the authenticity and inspiration of the Bible itself." Vol. ii. pp. 249, 250.

"In the quiet bosom of the English Church, in which a philosophic latitudinarianism was fast rising ascendant over High Church bigotry on the one hand, and Low Church enthusiasm on the other, the colonial doubters and free-thinkers, and all those to whom Puritan austerity was repulsive, were inclined to seek refuge. There are always many whom decent ceremonies delight. The ambitious hoped to recommend themselves, as churchmen, to the authorities at home. The rich and polite preferred a worship which seemed to bring them into sympathy with the English aristocracy. The same influences were felt in America as in England, where the Dissenters were fast sliding back into the Church." Vol. ii. p. 307.

The account of the spread of latitudinarian opinions in New England is in the author's most sarcastic manner.

"The seeds of schism were broadly sown ; but extreme caution and moderation on the side of the Latitudinarians long prevented any open rupture. They rather insinuated than avowed their opinions. Afraid of a controversy, in which they were conscious that popular prejudice would be all against them, unsettled many of them in their own minds, and not daring to probe matters to the bottom, they patiently waited the further effects of that progressive change by which they themselves had been borne along. To gloss over their heresies, they called themselves Arminians ; they even took the name of moderate Calvinists. Like all doubters, they lacked the zeal and energy of faith. Like all dissemblers, they were timid and hesitating. Conservatives as well as Latitudinarians, they wished, above all things, to enjoy their salaries and clerical dignities in comfort and in peace. Free comparatively in their studies, they were very cautious in their pulpits how they shocked the fixed prejudices of a bigoted people, whose bread they ate. It thus happened that while the New England theology, as held by the more intelligent, underwent decided changes, the old Puritan phraseology was still generally preserved, and the old Puritan doctrines, in consequence, still kept their hold, to a great extent, on the mass of the people. Yet remarkable local modifications of opinion were silently produced by individual ministers, the influence of the abler Latitudinarian divines being traceable to this day in the respective places of their settlement. The growth of Latitudinarianism was the natural fruit of that doctrine of the Puritan fathers, the necessity of a learned ministry. That learning on which they relied against papist and prelatie superstition on the one hand, and Antinomian

enthusiasm on the other, could not but react on themselves. As the exalted religious imagination of New England subsided to the common level, *as reason and the moral sense began to struggle against the overwhelming pressure of religious awe, a party inevitably appeared which sought by learned glosses to accommodate the hard text of the Scriptures and the hard doctrines of the popular creed to the altered state of the public mind.*" Vol. ii. 309 – 311.

Some of the effects of the "Great Revival," as it was called, which took place about the middle of the last century, mainly as a consequence of the preaching of Whitefield, are thus described : —

"It was one consequence of the check to Latitudinarian ideas, growing out of this religious revival, greatly to diminish in the public estimate that high importance ascribed to learning by the Puritan founders of New England. *This triumph, however, of faith over learning, was more apparent than real. As the necessity of education to qualify men to be teachers of religion and morals diminished in the popular view, reason and learning, not needed in the pulpit, found other avenues to the public mind.*

"Notwithstanding all the efforts and remarkable success of the revivalists, from that day to this, religion has gone on declining in political and historical importance. The modern doctrines of religious freedom and free inquiry have constantly gained ground, throwing more and more into the shade that old idea, acted upon with special energy by the Puritan colonists of New England — deep traces of which are also to be found in every North American code — the theocratic idea of a Christian commonwealth, in which every other interest must be made subservient to unity of faith and worship, the state being held responsible to God for the salvation of the souls intrusted to its charge.

"Abandoning a thought which for centuries had dazzled the imagination of Christendom, giving rise to a thousand heroic efforts, but the impracticability of which was now becoming apparent, the revivalists fell back on the notion of individual salvation. Adopting a quietistic theory, leaving politics to worldly men or the providence of God, it became their prominent idea not to save the commonwealth, but to save themselves. Religion, so conspicuous hitherto as the glowing, sometimes lurid, atmosphere of our historical picture, fades henceforth, almost vanishes away." Vol. ii. pp. 390, 391.

We need not multiply extracts of this character; even if they were not written with any insidious purpose of undermining all religious belief, their bitter and sarcastic tone, in a grave historical work, is singularly disagreeable. We willingly pass

over them to a consideration of those general features of Mr. Hildreth's history, in which it invites comparison with works of the same class.

There is evidence in these volumes of some care and research in the collection of materials, and of skill in the condensation and arrangement of them, so that the story is brought within moderate compass, and has the requisite appearance of unity. It would be a very laborious task, however, to verify all the statements, for there are no exact references to the authorities that were used, and this defect is very imperfectly supplied by a list, appended to the third volume, of works illustrative of the history of America, such as might easily be made out in a few hours from the catalogue of any good public library. As it is nowhere mentioned how much use has been made of these specified authorities, we see not that any useful purpose is answered by the publication of the list. It is fair to presume, under these circumstances, that the work was mainly written from second-hand authorities, care being taken to refer to the original sources of information often enough to prevent serious mistakes, and to glean some additional matter. This is the easiest mode of writing history, but it will not satisfy those who have had much experience in tracing historical statements to the sources whence they were professedly drawn.

We have noticed one mistake apparently caused by a want of familiarity with the works of the very author whose peculiar opinions are made the subject of comment. When speaking of the several propositions brought forward by British writers for the purpose of terminating the great dispute which threatened to separate the American colonies from the mother country, Mr. Hildreth considers particularly the one made by "Dean Tucker, a pamphleteer of that day, author of the '*Light of Nature*,' a work so much applauded by Paley." Abraham Tucker, a metaphysician, who "had no turn for politics," and who was the author of the "*Light of Nature Pursued*," which he published under the pseudonym of Edward Search, became blind in 1771, and died three years afterwards. Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, published his celebrated series of pamphlets, advocating a separation from the Colonies, mostly in 1775 and 1776, and died at an advanced age, about the close of the last century. Mr. Hildreth seems to mistake

the ecclesiastical title of "Dean" for a part of the proper name ; if so, he cannot have seen even the title-pages of Dean Tucker's pamphlets, which appear in his list of "authorities" under the general designation of "Tracts and Sermons."

Upon one division of the work, indeed, the author has evidently consulted the original authorities with much diligence, and has thereby given a peculiar value to his history. He has carefully studied the early legislation of the several colonies, and has given concise abstracts of the statutes passed at different periods, which throw much light upon the customs, opinions, and polity of each settlement. Especially in relation to the subjects of slavery and the slave trade, these abstracts are very full, and contain much curious and instructive matter. The interest reflected back upon this historical topic by the controversy that is now agitating the country, probably induced the writer to allot to it a larger portion of his work than it would otherwise have obtained. Sometimes, perhaps, the space thus given seems inordinate. Thus, in the account given of the debates and proceedings at the second session of the first Congress, thirty pages are devoted to an abstract of a long discussion of some resolutions respecting slavery and the slave trade, which did not lead to any act of a strictly legislative character ; and a space considerably less than this to the report and debate on the national debt and the funding system. The opinions of the historian, as an uncompromising opponent of the institution of slavery, are manifest enough ; but they are not brought forward in an obtrusive manner.

The importance of minute and diligent research, of a laborious examination of every page of the original authorities, as a necessary preparation for writing the history even of comparatively recent periods, has been, perhaps, somewhat exaggerated of late years ; so that too many histories have appeared which are crammed with a painful collection of insignificant facts, loosely strung together, that teach no valuable lesson, and rather oppress the memory than stimulate the intellect, or gratify the curiosity, of the reader. We are as much opposed as Mr. Hildreth is, to that "parade of references" which serves only "to increase the size and cost of the book," and please the vanity of the author. But research and reference are not to be abandoned altogether. Gibbon's

references, numerous as they are, are not paraded and are not superfluous ; the work would lose much of its value without them. And even for the history of modern times, we do not like being compelled either to rely implicitly upon the diligence and fidelity of the historian, or to do his work for him in verifying every doubtful statement by a thorough examination of the original authorities.

And thus much must be said in favor of careful and far-extended inquiry, that its indirect effects upon the mind of the historian are often more important than its immediate results. By laborious study of the works and manuscripts written at the time, and by the actors in the scenes which are described, the student becomes imbued with their spirit and animated by their enthusiasm. He begins to live in the olden times of which he is to be the chronicler. His mind gradually loses its hold of the prepossessions and theories with which he began his task. The opinions and the sentiments of his own age and country cease to be a standard for judging those of every other. Thus the biographer gradually conceives an affection for his hero, of whose character he had previously determined to be a rigid and impartial judge ; and the historian learns to appreciate the times and the men of whom he is to write, and of whom his studies have virtually made him a contemporary. If Mr. Hildreth had pored over the records and memorials of the Puritan fathers of New England as long and as diligently as some of our antiquarian friends have done, he could not have written their history in the stern, sarcastic, and depreciating tone which now characterizes his work. He would have judged them more leniently, with fuller knowledge and greater fairness. As it is, the Preface affords a fair indication of the spirit of the whole performance. It is written with a pen steeped in gall ; it is bitter and denunciatory from beginning to end.

The third volume of the first series of Mr. Hildreth's work contains the history of the Revolutionary war and the formation of the Federal Constitution ; the first volume of the new series brings down the story to the end of Washington's administration, and contains a promise of two more volumes, which will close with the presidency of Mr. Monroe. Of these latter portions of the work we have little to remark. The history of the Revolution is clearly and succinctly told, but in as

cold-blooded a manner as if the writer had been engaged with an account of a long struggle between two tribes of savages in the heart of Africa. *Nil admirari* might be inscribed on the volume as its motto. The account of the battle of Bunker Hill, which "figures in history as having tested the ability of the provincials to meet a British army in the field," closes with the characteristic remark, that "the men engaged in it were not all heroes. The conduct of several officers on that day was investigated by court martial, and one, at least, was cashiered for cowardice." The spirit of this remark is a fair indication of the general tone of this portion of the work.

There is one point of view, certainly, from which the American Revolution may be regarded as rather an insignificant affair. It was only the violent separation from the parent country of thirteen feeble Colonies, whose inhabitants, taken together, hardly equalled in number the present population of the State of New York or the city of London. The quarrel had an apparently trivial origin. A long dispute about the exact boundaries of the power of the Crown and of Parliament over America had come to a crisis on the grave question whether the Colonists should pay a tax, imposed without their consent, of threepence a pound on tea. The exasperation of both parties gradually rose to such a point that bloodshed ensued ; and when the sword was once drawn, England would hear of nothing but unconditional submission, and America renounced forever her allegiance to the British crown. This extremity had not been foreseen or desired. Independence was an afterthought, which would have been almost unanimously rejected, had it been proposed as an object of effort before the battle was fought at Lexington. The struggle which ensued was an obstinate and protracted one ; but it was feebly conducted on both sides. There was not one brilliant campaign ; no splendid feats of arms were achieved ; not one general officer distinguished himself as a master of strategy, or evinced qualities in the field which would have earned for him high military renown in Europe. The Americans were defeated in almost every general engagement, even when they had a great preponderance in numbers. They were finally successful through foreign aid and the exhaustion of their great antagonist. But the change thus

accomplished in their political condition was not a striking one, and had no immediate momentous effects, except that for some years they were exposed to great danger of anarchy and general bankruptcy. After reviewing the constitutions established by the several States, and the powers of Congress as they were defined at the close of the war, Mr. Hildreth says, "it is apparent from this review that the Revolution made no sudden nor violent change in the laws or political institutions of America beyond casting off the superintending power of the mother country; and even that power, always limited, was replaced to a great extent by the authority of Congress."

This, we say, is a possible view of the American Revolution; it gives the same general idea of it that we derive from Mr. Hildreth's history. It is not a caricature, and we know not that a single statement in it can be successfully impugned. But here again it may be said, that it is not the truth, because it is not the whole truth. When regarded in its broadest aspect, and when its causes, its general character, and its consequences are fairly estimated, the Revolution appears in its proper light, as one of the greatest events in the annals of nations. It was a turning point in the history of the world. Its remote effects are still developing themselves upon the continent of Europe, and shaping the political destiny of the most enlightened portions of mankind. It gave the initial impulse to the first French revolution, and to some extent determined its character; and through that, it is still heaving the foundations of the most stable monarchies of the Old World. The whole of our Western Continent was long since revolutionized by it, and is still experiencing its good or ill results. It was the first war of opinion between a people and a government, which was not kindled by the fires of theological controversy, and which was conducted by the people to a successful termination. The experiment of a Commonwealth had been tried in England, and had failed, — so disastrously failed, that the patriots of 1688 feared to renew the trial, and contented themselves with merely changing the line of their kings. It succeeded here, and the consequences of its success have been momentous. Even a frivolous and cold-hearted wit like Horace Walpole, writing at the outbreak of the Revolution, had sagacity enough to declare, that the

independence of America would be "a new era in the annals of mankind."

But we need not dwell upon this view, or endeavor to expand it to its full dimensions. The reflection of every reader at all conversant with the history of the last three quarters of a century will readily fill up the outline. The interest reflected back upon the American Revolution by the long train of great events of which it was the prelude and inciting cause, give it a new value and dignity in the eyes of the philosophical observer. Every little incident connected with it appears worthy of study ; the actors in it become ennobled by the magnitude of the work of which they were generally the unconscious instruments. The farmers and mechanics who were engaged in the running fight at Lexington, or in the short and sharp conflict at Bunker Hill, take their place among the movers in the great crises which have affected the destiny of mankind. Any historian of the Revolution who fails to regard it in this light, leaves out what should form the characteristic feature of his work. In this case, certainly, a barren chronicle of events does not constitute a true history.

We have spoken frankly, though with no unkind spirit, of the faults of Mr. Hildreth's performance, because they seem to be serious blemishes in a work of such pretensions, which begins with a sweeping censure of its predecessors, and aspires to present the history of America for the first time in its true character. It is not a feeble or careless production ; the author of it is an independent thinker, a correct writer, and has other eminent qualifications for his task. But he began with a wrong conception of his subject, and has written upon it under as strong a bias of preconceived opinion, as that which affects a professed eulogist or a bigoted defender of a narrow creed in politics or religion. His work is most faulty in the very respect in which he seems most ambitious to excel ; and he has thus shown, though in a manner which he did not intend, that freedom from prejudice is the first requisite of a historian.